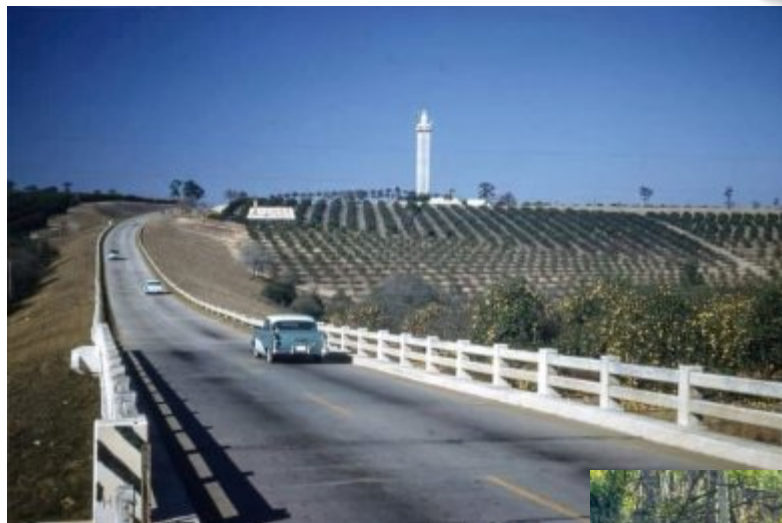


Taking Charge



We're baaaaaaack! On December 23rd, we made our way back to Florida, just in time to celebrate the holidays with family. Though we originally planned to stay a few months to visit friends and family and get all those pesky checkups out of the way, we found some reasons to stick around a little longer. The first great grandbaby is



due May 2nd, and a wedding cruise in mid-May keep us in the area until Memorial Day weekend.

Trying to get a reasonably priced, safe and visually appealing campground reservation in Florida during the winter is not an easy task. But with lots of advance planning, we managed some Thousand Trails and state and city park reservations, with some last-minute rescues

by the Elks and county parks. We've been staying between North and Central Florida and were lucky to get spots at Manatee Springs and Blue Spring State Parks as well as Jacksonville's Hanna Park in Atlantic Beach. The real gem was getting a cancelled spot for a week at Gamble Rogers State Park on the ocean!

Manatee State Park is just north of Cedar Key and was hit hard by Hurricane Helene. Clean up was almost complete by February 2025. Although the park is rustic, it sits on the Suwannee River and is home to manatees in the winter. There are areas roped off to enjoy swimming or diving in the natural spring but keep an eye out for the gators. They can be seen sunning themselves on exposed water tree roots

everywhere! Or, like us you can enjoy the spring, river, and wildlife views from the safety of the long boardwalk.

The real surprise was two weeks at the Thousand Trails Orlando located in the Four Corners area between Clermont and Kissimmee. It's one of the nicest locations in the Thousand Trails system—well maintained

with large, paved sites, clean facilities and all the amenities. And what the heck happened to Clermont? It used to be out in the middle of nothing, surrounded by orange groves. Now, it's a pretty part of town with lots of convenient shopping and restaurants. Soon the access to the cross-town expressways will be complete, and it won't seem like it's in the middle of nowhere any longer.

After a goof up with our Blue Spring reservation, we landed in Titusville for the next two weeks. It was our first scramble to change our plans ON MOVING DAY. Lucky for us, we were early, had plenty of range in the truck, and kept our cool. Though we don't get the springs, we get sunny beaches, rocket launches, and the beautiful Indian River—from which our Rivian is named.

The best part about this leg of our journey has been catching up with wonderful friends and family, so generous with their guest (and laundry) rooms. Mom has gotten her card game back on, and what a fantastically fun time at Jola's seeing everyone at once when we first arrived. We had missed you all and feel so lucky to share our adventures with you. Until next time...

